

William H. Salter

Bill reached his formative years when the Great Depression (the "Dirty Thirties") hit the Canadian economy. With high and mounting unemployment in the early 1930s, Bill found himself seeing Canada courtesy the boxcars of the railway companies. A life of high adventure had begun.



In 1933, Bill joined the 21st Medium Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA), Non-Permanent Active Militia. He served with the "militia" through the depression while the war clouds gathered over Europe, rising in rank to Sergeant. With the outbreak of WW II in September, 1939, he transferred to the 53rd Field Battery, RCA, reverting to the rank of Bombardier. By December, Bill was again promoted to Sergeant and, in May, 1940, he was posted to the United Kingdom. This marked not only the start of his long service in Europe but also his initial encounter with his future wife; they sailed to Europe on the same ship (reflecting the young Sergeant's ingenuity as much as coincidence).

In 1941, Bill was sent to the Canadian Officers' Training School in the UK and he received his commission as Lieutenant in November of that year. For the next two years, he served in the UK.

In November, 1943 he proceeded to the Central Mediterranean Area, serving with the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, RCA through the Italian Campaign until February, 1945 when the Canadians in Italy were sent to join their countrymen to form the First Canadian Army in Northwest Europe. By this time, Bill had been promoted to Captain.

Bill served with the Headquarters, 5th Armoured Division, RCA throughout the final four months of WW II, returning to the UK in June, 1945 and thence to Canada the following month. Bill decided the army life was to his liking and he remained in the service, serving in a variety of posts in Canada until March 1954. Bill was promoted to Major in 1952.

In March 1954, he proceeded to the Headquarters, Canadian Base Units, Far East. He returned to Canada in June, 1955. For the next ten years Bill served with the Branch of the General Staff directorate of militia and cadets. He was promoted to Lt-Col in January, 1962 and was honourably released from the service in February, 1966.

Bill and his wife Elsie were long-time residents of Richmond where their children also spent their final school years. Building on his immediate predecessor's fine foundation, Bill was the Branch 625 Membership Chairman through the years of phenomenal growth in membership. He richly deserves the credit for the honours that have been granted to the Branch for its record growth and renewal rates. Bill was President of the Richmond Legion from 1995 to 1996.

Bill passed away on March 29, 2005 after a short illness and is survived by his wife Elsie Ruby Storey, his children Diane Sandra, William Silas, Marilyn Jean, Thomas Edward Dales, Beverly Anne, and Kim Robinson. He had 16 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. Elsie lives in Richmond and is still active with the Legion.

